



NETWORKS NEWS

100MBIT/S BROADBAND?

A Finnish company predicts that broadband speeds of 100Mbit/s will soon be available in the home. According to Teleste such speeds may be available over existing cable TV connections as early as next year.

Current UK broadband services typically offer 2Mbit/s, although firms such as Bulldog provide an 8Mbit/s service. Teleste says that demand for video over broadband will drive the adoption of high-speed services. Teleste's Pekka Rissanen said: "Based on our research 30Mbit/s is the absolute minimum in future homes. Just one TV programme would take 10-20Mbit/s of this alone. So, very quickly we would reach a need for 30 megabits, and also for 50Mbit/s."

The company plans to introduce its Ethernet to the Home product, which will deliver these 100Mbit/s speeds, next year. It is currently running a pilot service with Dutch TV service provider Essent.

USR TO THE MAX



US Robotics has launched its MaxG wireless router. The company claims that the router extends

range by around 50 per cent and increases throughput. Unlike proprietary MIMO routers, the MaxG router complies with the 802.11g standard, so you should benefit from the extended range with existing wireless kit. The MaxG range includes PCI, CardBus and USB adaptors. The router costs around £70.

HOTLIST NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE

BUFFALO Terastation 1TB



RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £598 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com

DETAILS www.morecomputers.co.uk

If your hard disk is already full of digital photographs and music files, Buffalo's 1TB Terastation is the perfect answer, providing an excellent way to boost storage on a network. This device has four 250GB hard disks. You can also use RAID to protect your valuable data. The system is very easy to set up, and considering the price of the individual components it's great value.



SPECIFICATIONS 1TB Storage (four 250GB hard disks), Gigabit Ethernet, four USB2 ports. **Part code** HD-H1.0TGLR5

REVIEW WIRELESS RANGE EXTENDER

HAWKING TECHNOLOGY Wireless-G Range Extender

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £57 inc VAT

SUPPLIER <http://uk.insight.com>

DETAILS www.hawkingeurope.com

If your home network suffers from poor wireless range, you might consider buying a new router. Hawking Technology's Wireless-G Range Extender offers another route, and you won't have to replace anything.

The device looks like a wireless access point and works by repeating the signal to boost your existing network. Unlike manufacturer-specific products, it works with any 802.11g network, so it's particularly useful if you have an unbranded router or one from a company that doesn't make its own repeater.

During installation a setup wizard assigns the device an IP address, after which you can control it from a web browser. First, you enter your wireless network settings so that the extender can become part of the network. The version we tried supported only WEP encryption, but a free WPA upgrade should be available on the manufacturer's website.

Next, you define a new SSID for the extender, which devices use to connect to it. Security settings are the same as those for your main network. From the client side, PCs connect to the new network and the Wireless-G passes the data to the original one.



This system is not as smooth as one that uses repeaters and a router from the same manufacturer. In effect you have two wireless networks and must decide which to join based on where you are. What's more, the network only works at 54Mbit/s, so you lose all turbo modes.

We tested the extender in our labs. At a range of just over six metres without the extender we managed 50 per cent signal strength and transfer rates of 4.5Mbit/s; with the extender we achieved 100 per cent signal strength and 6.28Mbit/s.

While the speed wasn't massively improved, the Wireless-G will stop your wireless signal cutting out. For unbranded 802.11g networks this is a good way to improve range, but the relatively complex setup means you're better off with products from the same manufacturer where possible.

David Ludlow



Works with any 802.11g network; increases signal stability



Doesn't support turbo modes; more difficult to use than other repeaters

SPECIFICATIONS 802.11g 54Mbit/s wireless LAN extender, one LAN port, supports WEP (WPA via firmware upgrade). **Part code** HWUR54G

REVIEW WIRELESS ROUTER

BUFFALO MIMO

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £93 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.morecomputers.co.uk

DETAILS www.buffalotech.com

Buffalo's MIMO router has three aerials to transmit and receive its wireless signal and uses technology similar to that of Belkin's Pre-N. The idea is that it creates a wider signal that can bounce around walls and obstructions, increasing the range and signal strength. However, MIMO is not an official standard and could become obsolete in the next few years.

It's also one of the ugliest pieces of kit we've seen. Its brown and silver plastic is bad enough, but its huge case and 1980s clock radio design are even worse. Fortunately, it's what inside that counts.

The device is set up using the same web-based management console as Buffalo's other products. This is a good choice, as the console has been well designed and is among the easiest to use. It has some clever tools including an internet line check. The SSID is based on the router's MAC address, so it's unique out of the box, while WEP and WPA handle the security. The quick-setup wizard takes most of the pain out of installation and it didn't take us long to get it running.

The router uses AOSS: press the button on the router, run the client software on your PC and all



the wireless settings are transmitted automatically. It works with Buffalo's cards and Centrino notebooks, but to benefit from the extra range and performance that MIMO offers you need to use Buffalo's MIMO network adaptors. We tested the CardBus version on a notebook.

In our labs we recorded throughput of 22.8Mbit/s at close range. Moving just over six metres away we recorded a slight drop, but at 21.7Mbit/s it was still very impressive. However, Belkin's Pre-N equipment is around the same price and, in our tests, a touch faster.

David Ludlow



Fast; AOSS makes configuring wireless clients easy



Ugly; not the fastest around

SPECIFICATIONS 802.11g wireless router, four LAN ports, one WAN port, 108Mbit/s turbo mode, AOSS. **Part code** WZR-G108-1